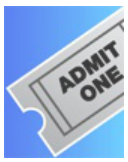
Credit Card Companies Fielding A Ton Of Complaints Over NSFW Games Disappearing On Platforms



Culture

from the *just-take-our-money* dept

Thu, Jul 31st 2025 08:00pm - Timothy Geigner

A week or so ago, Karl Bode wrote about Vice Media's idiotic decision to disappear several articles that had been written by its Waypoint property concerning Collective Shout. Collective Shout is an Australian group that pretends to be a feminist organization, when, in reality, it operates much more like any number of largely evangelical groups bent on censoring any content that doesn't align with their own viewpoints (which they insist become your viewpoints as well). The point of Karl's post was to correctly point out that Collective Shout's decision to go after the payment processors for the major video game marketplaces over their offering NSFW games shouldn't be hidden from the public in the interest of clickbait non-journalism.

But that whole thing about Collective Shout putting on a pressure campaign on payment processors is in and of itself a big deal, as is the response to it. Both Steam and itch.io recently either removed or de-indexed a ton of games they're labeling NSFW, chiefly along guidelines clearly provided by the credit card companies themselves. Now, Collective Shout will tell you that it is mostly interested in going after games that depict vile actions in some ways, such as rape, child abuse, and incest.

> *No Mercy. That's the name of the incest-and-rape-focused game that was geo-blocked in Australia this April, following a campaign by the local pressure group Collective Shout. The group, which stands against "the increasing pornification of culture", then set its sights on a broader target - hundreds of other games they identified as featuring rape, incest, or child sexual abuse on Steam and itch.io. "We approached payment processors because Steam did not respond to us," said the group of its latest campaign.*
>
> *The move was effective. Steam began removing sex-related games it deemed to violate the standards of its payment processors, presenting the choice as a tradeoff in a statement to Rock Paper Shotgun: "We are retiring those games from being sold on the Steam Store, because loss of payment methods would prevent customers from being able to purchase other titles and game content on Steam."*

Itch.io followed that up shortly afterwards with its de-indexing plan, but went further and did this with *all* NSFW games offered on the platform. Unlike Steam, itch.io was forthcoming as to their reasoning for its actions. And they were remarkably simple.

> *"Our ability to process payments is critical for every creator on our platform," Corcoran said. "To ensure that we can continue to operate and provide a marketplace for all developers, we must prioritize our relationship with our payment partners and take immediate steps towards compliance."*

Digital marketplaces being unable to collect payment through trusted partners would be, to put it tersely, the end of their business. Those same payment processors can get predictably itchy about partnering with platforms that host content that someone out there, or many someones as part of a coordinated campaign, may not like for fear that will sully their reputation. And because these are private companies we're talking about, their fear along with any of their own sense of morality are at play here. The end result is a digital world filled with digital marketplaces that all exist under an umbrella of god-like payment

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processors that can pretty much dictate to those other private entities what can be on offer and what cannot.

And, as an executive from Appcharge chimed in, the processors will hang this all on the amount of fraud and chargebacks that come along with adult content, but that doesn't change the question about whether payment processors should be neutral on legal but morally questionable content or not. Because, as you would expect, the aims of folks like Collective Shout almost certainly don't end with things like rape and incest.

> *It's possible that Collective Shout's campaign highlighted a level of operational and reputational risk that payment processors weren't aware of, and of a severity they didn't expect. "I'm guessing it's also the moral element," Tov-Ly says. "It just makes sense, right? Why would you condone incest or rape promoting games?"*
>
> *Tov-Ly is of the opinion that payment processors offer a utility, and should have no more role in the moral arbitration of art than your electricity company – meaning, none at all. "Whenever you open that Pandora's box, you're not impartial anymore," he says. "Today it's rape games and incest, but tomorrow it could be another lobbying group applying pressure on LGBT games in certain countries."*

We've already seen this sort of thing when it comes to book and curriculum bans that are currently plaguing far too much of the country. When porn can mean ***Magic Treehouse***, the word loses all meaning.

What is actually happening is that payment processors are feeling what they believe is "public pressure", but which is actually just a targeted and coordinated campaign from a tiny minority of people who watched *V For Vendetta* and thought it was an instruction manual. Well, the public has caught wind of this, as have game publishers that might be caught up in this censorship or whatever comes next, and coordinated contact campaigns to payment processors **to complain about this new censorship** are being conducted.

> *Gilbert Martinez had just poured himself a glass of water and was pacing his suburban home in San Antonio, Texas while trying to navigate Mastercard's byzantine customer service hotline. He was calling to complain about recent reports that the company is pressuring online gaming storefronts **like Steam and Itch.io** to ban certain adult games. He estimates his first call lasted about 18 minutes and ended with him lodging a formal complaint in the wrong department.*
>
> *Martinez is part of a growing backlash to Steam and Itch.io purging thousands of games from their databases at the behest of payment processing companies. Australia-based **anti-porn group Collective Shout** claimed credit for the new wave of censorship after inciting a write-in campaign against Visa and Mastercard, which it accused of profiting off "rape, incest, and child sexual abuse game sales." Some fans of gaming are now mounting reverse campaigns in the hopes of nudging Visa and Mastercard in the opposite directions.*

If noise is what is going to make these companies go back to something resembling sanity, this will hopefully do the trick. We're already seeing examples of games that are being unjustly censored, described as porn when they are very much not. Not to mention instances where nuance is lost and the "porn" content is actually the opposite.

> *Vile: Exhumed is a textbook example of what critics of the sex game purge always feared: that guidelines aimed at clamping down on pornographic games believed to be encouraging or glorifying sexual violence would inevitably ensnare serious works of art grappling with difficult and uncomfortable subject matter in important ways. Who gets to decide which is which? For a long time, it appeared to be Steam and Itch.io. Last week's purges revealed it's actually Visa and Mastercard, and whoever can frighten them the most with bad publicity.*
>
> *Some industry trade groups have also weighed in. The International Game Developers Association (IGDA) released a statement stating that "censorship like this is materially harmful to game developers" and urging a dialogue between "platforms, payment processors, and industry leaders with developers and advocacy groups." "We welcome collaboration and transparency," it wrote. "This issue is not just about adult content. It is about developer rights, artistic freedom, and the sustainability of diverse creative work in games."*

This is the result of a meddling minority attempting to foist their desires on everyone else, plain and simple. Choking the money supply is a smart choice, sure, but one that should be recognized in this case

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politician thing where they give canned answers. Not blaming him, they all do it, in this case surely because, as my young brain realized, he didn't know who I was or what I'd say about him. This tempered my expectations for interactions with politicians ever since. There's no angle in it for them to open up to a complete stranger.

aabsurdity: Sure, but don't forget they could also be being ambushed by an opposing political agent.

They can't open up to just anyone. Gotta be fair to them, even if it turns them into weird, plastic people.

It's one of the reasons people like Republican politicians. They're more open and honest. About being Nazis. And stupid. But they're open about it.

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Thursday

for what it is: censorship based on proclivities that are not widely shared. And if there really is material in these games that is illegal, it should obviously be done away with.

But we should not be playing this game of pretending content that is not widely seen as immoral should somehow be choked of its ability to participate in commerce.

Filed Under: censorship, nsfw, payment processors, prude police, video games
Companies: collective shout, itch.io, steam, valve

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65 Comments | Collapse all replies

Anonymous Coward July 31, 2025 at 8:12 pm

"Choking the money supply is a smart choice, sure, but one that should be recognized in this case for what it is: censorship based on proclivities that are not widely shared."

Taking bets on whether the usual TechDirt brigade will be by to explain why censorship isn't censorship :v

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[2]

Arianity (profile) July 31, 2025 at 11:53 pm

Re:

Ok, we all have to admit that timing is *really* funny given the argument going on in the other comment section. Well done, Tim.

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[3]

Rocky (profile) August 1, 2025 at 1:26 am

05:26 Trump, Ellison Wage War On 'Woke Netflix' In Effort To Scuttle Warner Brothers Deal, Dominate U.S. Media (2)

Wednesday

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10:55 Daily Deal: The Complete CompTIA And IT Exam Prep Bundle (0)

09:27 Prosecutors Flee DOJ After Being Told To Investigate The Murdered Woman, Not The Murderer (33)

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Tuesday

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More

Re: Re:

It's only funny if you have convinced yourself that you are winning the argument.

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[4]

Arianity (profile) August 1, 2025 at 12:09 pm

Re: Re: Re:

I do regret not using that example, but I think you can appreciate the comedy of the timing regardless. Even if I agreed it'd still be at least a little funny.

Reply | View in chronology

[4]

You (We, Us) August 6, 2025 at 9:49 pm

Re: Re: Re:

You don't think it is funny because you know you are losing the argument?

Collapse replies (2) | Reply | View in chronology

[5]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 7, 2025 at 4:21 am

Re: Re: Re:[2]

Define "losing the argument" in this context. I mean, are you actually **for** credit card companies and paypros and banks working together to route around the First Amendment and deny people the right to buy whatever weird-yet-legal porn they want?

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[6]

You (We, Us) August 10, 2025 at 2:17 am

Re: Re: Re:[3]

You will have to define winning first as I used losing in the opposite to winning

Reply | View in chronology

[2]

Kinetic Gothic August 1, 2025 at 3:09 am

Re:

Ah, but the usual Techdirt debate is not whether or not it's censorship. It's if it's Government censorship prohibited by the First Amendment, Which is why it makes a difference if it's some Bible thumping yahoo's campaign, a Senator jawboning info requests or a Sherrif sending legal notices.

And as I noted elsewhere, the political right has apparently decided that what's good for the bakeshop, need not be good for the bank... cake makers turning away Gay couples is one thing.. but GOD FORBID a bank turns away the NRA or Exxon.

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[3]

Anonymous Coward August 1, 2025 at 10:04 am

Re: Re:

There's people on this here site who will happily give you an entire (hole-ridden, self-serving, and self-contradictory) spiel about how only governments are capable of censorship, entirely free of the question of whether that violates the primciples of, or specific legal expression in a particular place, free speech.

Those people are very silly, of course, and this article shows a beautiful counter example to that nonsense.

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[4]

Kinetic Gothic August 1, 2025 at 12:16 pm

Re: Re: Re:

Yeah, and also there's a plentiful crowd who will scream that they're being illegally silenced if someone so much as speaks up to say they're full of shit. Despite them having a robust soapbox that nobody is stopping them from using in any way shape or manner.

They're equally if not more silly, and they're holding political office right now.

Reply | View in chronology

[4]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 1, 2025 at 12:35 pm

Re: Re: Re:

> *There's people on this here site who will happily give you an entire (hole-ridden, self-serving, and self-contradictory) spiel about how only governments are capable of censorship*

Hi, it's me, I'm the asshole to which this Coward is obliquely referring because they're too fucking afraid to say my name—and for the record, I don't make that argument.

Of course private entities are capable of censorship. I've been following this story nearly since the beginning, and I'm not about to say "oh, it's not censorship because the government isn't involved". Yes, Collective Shout is a group of censorious assholes because they want to stop certain kinds of games from being made available. Yes, the payment processors are censorious assholes because they're being pressured by groups like CS, and putting pressure on storefronts like Steam and Itch, to stop certain kinds of games from being sold. And if we're gonna get really fucking real: The banks/financial institutions that put pressure on the payment processors to avoid sales of adult content are also to blame for this shit. None of those assholes need to go through a court or any other government institution to make this happen.

My opinion on the matter is that this shit is absolutely censorship, the people enacting it should be fucking ashamed of themselves, and the banks/payment processors should be as neutral as possible in re: monetary transactions. If they tell you that they're being neutral except in regards to **"illegal adult content"**, ask them what specific illegal content was found on Steam/Itch—seriously, make them name specific products—and why those sites began delisting perfectly legal adult content if the payment processors are otherwise "okay" with it.

Collapse replies (25) | Reply | View in chronology

[5]

Anonymous Coward August 1, 2025 at 4:09 pm

Re: Re: Re:[2]

"Of course private entities are capable of censorship."

You should tell that to that Stephen T. Stone fellow who keeps posting stuff like

"Kicking someone out of your home for shit-talking your dog or your mom or your favorite hand-woven Mongolian basket isn't censorship; treating that act like it's the same thing as the government telling you "unpublish that speech or we'll destroy you" is how people end up thinking content moderation is censorship."

or

"I don't want anyone (including myself) called a "censor" because they told someone "hey, we don't allow that speech here, go somewhere else""

or

"The problem with trying to define content moderation as censorship is that the speech being yoinked off a social media site for violating TOS can be repeated elsewhere, so it can't really be suppressed"

The only way you truly genuinely censor things, from the stuff you post, would be to balefire someone out of existence. Which is a nonsense and doesn't square with the things you actually do manage to get around to calling censorship, and the reason why is simple: you don't actually have coherent principles as to what counts and what does not other than "I personally am not a censor" and "this act makes me mad".

Collapse replies (16) | Reply | View in chronology

[6]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 1, 2025 at 4:45 pm

Re: Re: Re:[3]

> *The only way you truly genuinely censor things, from the stuff you post, would be to balefire someone out of existence.*

No. No, it would not. But since you have to misrepresent my positions to get to this point, you're either too ignorant to understand the nuance of what I've been saying or too invested in "winning"

this little Internet slapfight that you have to lie about my position.

If I've ever said "only the government can censor people" in the past, that statement is one haven't believed for years (if ever). I will say that the most effective/powerful forms of censorship do involve the government—specifically through laws passed by legislatures (e.g., laws prohibiting the creation/ownership/distribution of CSAM) and "common law" court precedents that may not be codified in the law but guide the law all the same. But to believe that private parties can't censor people is ridiculous when you look at the history of SLAPPs, political assassinations, book bans, and other such acts in the United States. Do some of those acts go through the courts and technically involve the government in some way? Yes. But they don't all do that. The issue being discussed in the article above, for example, is playing out without any significant involvement from the courts or the government.

> *you don't actually have coherent principles as to what counts and what does not*

I do, actually. My Techdirt comments on this subject, as well as the two columns I wrote for this site, are all about figuring out those principles for myself. If I'm given an argument that makes me reconsider those principles, I'd be happy about that. I'm glad to evolve my thinking if a cogent argument makes my thinking sharper. But no one has yet provided me with a "moderation is censorship, ackshually" argument that has changed my mind on the matter. You won't be the one to do it if all you have is "nyah-nah-nah-nah-nah, you're a little bi-tch". So give me a better argument or stop wasting your time—I don't care which.

Reply | View in chronology

[6]

Anonymous Coward August 2, 2025 at 3:31 am

Re: Re: Re:[3]

Except that being told you can't say a thing in one place is not censorship, being told you can't say it anywhere is. It's the latter thing the banks and payment processors are doing and the thing Stephen is talking about, shit for brains.

Collapse replies (12) | Reply | View in chronology

[7]

You (We, Us) August 3, 2025 at 6:53 pm

Re: Re: Re:[4]

Hello shit for brains!

Do you not have any way of buying anything without taking out a loan first? e-transfer, paypal etc...

20250803
953pmest

Collapse replies (2) | Reply | View in chronology

[8]

Anonymous Coward August 7, 2025 at 8:59 am

Re: Re: Re:[5]

> *Hello shit for brains!*

I see you're talking to yourself again. Interesting.

Reply | View in chronology

[8]

Anonymous Coward August 7, 2025 at 9:04 am

Re: Re: Re:[5]

And what would a loan serve me if no one will pass along any part of it so I can pay for some media I want to consume?

> *Hello shit for brains!*

Every accusation a confession.

Reply | View in chronology

[7]

Anonymous Coward August 3, 2025 at 7:17 pm

Re: Re: Re:[4]

That's a stupid distinction, because it's not true in the first place, partly because 'you can't say that anywhere' is not something anything sort of murder can actually achieve and partly because what's happening here is one private entity telling another that they won't conduct business with them — something Mr. Stone has been very emphatic isn't censorship in many other contexts.

I think it *is* actually censorship but I don't think Stephen's conclusion follows from his premises; he's engaging in post hoc reasoning to justify a result he came to for other reasons.

Collapse replies (8) | Reply | View in chronology

[8]

Rocky (profile) August 4, 2025 at 2:55 am

Re: Re: Re:[5]

> *That's a stupid distinction, because it's not true in the first place, partly because 'you can't say that anywhere' is not something anything sort of murder can actually achieve and partly because what's happening here is one private entity telling another that they won't conduct business with them — something Mr. Stone has been very emphatic isn't censorship in many other contexts.*

Oh, context! Do you know what the word means and why in different contexts involving other parties some actions aren't censorship because of it? Do someone actually have to explain to you what why that is?

> *I think it is actually censorship but I don't think Stephen's conclusion follows from his premises;*

> *he's engaging in post hoc reasoning to justify a result he came to for other reasons.*

He isn't, but I guess it's easier to justify your brand of lazy argument when you haven't actually read what Stephen has said throughout the years here on TD - because he has on multiple occasions said that private parties can censor people.

You seem hellbent on ignoring context while making up a position Stephen doesn't actually hold and in general shove words down his throat. Why are you so disingenuous?

Reply | View in chronology

[8]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 4, 2025 at 9:01 am

Re: Re: Re:[5]

> *what's happening here is one private entity telling another that they won't conduct business with them — something Mr. Stone has been very emphatic isn't censorship in many other contexts*

And the result of that denial is that a whole hell of a lot of people who were able to sell adult content on two of the biggest PC game storefronts in the world were suddenly denied that ability for no reason other than those storefronts bent to the will of corporate entities that demanded those storefronts either get rid of games with legal-yet-abhorrent content or lose their ability to work with payment processors and credit card companies (and the banks that really control them). If'n you don't think that's censorship only because those people can still theoretically sell their wares on far smaller storefronts through far lesser known payment processors, that's on you.

If this were Steam or Itch deciding on their own not to carry a game, that wouldn't be an issue. They have the right to decide what violates their TOS. But this situation is effectively financial blackmail because a corporate financial covenant is telling the storefronts to pull content based only on its content in exchange for being able to keep doing business with that covenant (which is basically required for those storefronts to keep doing business). That is straight-up censorship—and, at least for now, not a single government entity is involved with it.

Collapse replies (4) | Reply | View in chronology

[9]

You (We, Us) August 5, 2025 at 6:33 am

Re: Re: Re:[6]

If'n you don't think that's censorship only because those people can still theoretically sell their wares on far smaller storefronts through far lesser known payment processors, that's on you

This is your exact argument on other cases. They can go elsewhere

20250805
833amest

Collapse replies (3) | Reply | View in chronology

[10]

Rocky (profile) August 6, 2025 at 4:28 am

Re: Re: Re:[7]

> *This is your exact argument on other cases. They can go elsewhere*

No, it's just that you are too stupid to understand the difference.

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[11]

You (We, Us) August 6, 2025 at 4:43 am

Re: Re: Re:[8]

LOL

Okay rocky

Reply | View in chronology

[10]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 6, 2025 at 8:58 am

Re: Re: Re:[7]

> *This is your exact argument on other cases.*

No, it isn't.

My argument here is that Steam and Itch are inarguably two of the biggest storefronts for video games on the Internet, especially for independent game developers who may not have the funds to build their own dedicated (and secure) storefront on their own website. Denying indie devs a place on Steam and Itch—and doing so only because a small group of self-appointed self-righteous "moral guardians" don't like the content of the games made by those devs—is practically the same thing as denying them the ability to sell their games at all. I mean, show me any other storefront that is as well known as Steam and Itch while also being known as a home where indie content can flourish and be found with little-to-no issue through simple searches on the storefronts themselves.

Yes, the indie games that got delisted and whatnot probably could be found elsewhere outside of Steam and Itch. But why would anyone risk their financial information falling into the wrong hands by putting said info into a payment service/storefront which doesn't have the trustworthiness of Steam and Itch? That's my argument here: Steam and Itch have every right to decide what content they will and won't host, but when that decision happens because a bunch of assholes who think they're an actual God-appointed morality police force that decision by going after Steam and Itch's own ability to do business, **that** is censorship.

Reply | View in chronology

[8]

Anonymous Coward August 7, 2025 at 9:02 am

Re: Re: Re:[5]

> *…what's happening here is one private entity telling another that they won't conduct business with them…*

Except it's not just one payment processor/credit card provider, it's all of them, hence my accusation of censorship. Tell me, exactly what part of your civic education class was so hard for you?

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[9]

Uriel-238 (profile) August 7, 2025 at 2:06 pm

Re: Re: Re:[6] All the transaction processing providers

Borrowing from the logic of Extremely Decent (and their cable company commercial — **on YouTube**

They are what's called an *oligopoly,* which is like a monopoly but legal.

If they want to force you to capitulate to their unreasonable demands, well you can oligobble their balls.

Reply | View in chronology

[6]

kythra (profile) August 2, 2025 at 8:03 am

Re: Re: Re:[3] balefire?

Look I'm a wheel of time nerd too so I know exactly what you're talking about but your run of the mill person isn't going to know especially since the Amazon version of it got cancelled the idea that understanding will ever be mainstreamed is- yeah not likely.

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[7]

Anonymous Coward August 2, 2025 at 4:00 pm

Re: Re: Re:[4]

I'm posting on *Techdirt*.

Reply | View in chronology

[5]

You (We, Us) August 3, 2025 at 5:45 am

Re: Re: Re:[2]

Hi, it's me, I'm the asshole to which this Coward is obliquely referring...I don't make that argument

If you don't make that argument, why would you assume they are talking about you?

Narcissism at work.

Your words: “The First Amendment protects your rights to speak freely and associate with whomever you want. It doesn’t give you the right to make others listen, make others give you access to an audience, and/or make a personal soapbox out of private property you don’t own. Nobody owes you a platform or an audience at their expense.”

Not censorship then, according to you.

20250803
845am est

Collapse replies (7) | Reply | View in chronology

[6]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 3, 2025 at 4:41 pm

Re: Re: Re:[3]

> *If you don’t make that argument, why would you assume they are talking about you?*

Because (A) I’ve been outspoken about the difference between moderation and censorship on this site for years and (B) people tend to mistake my position on that matter as “oh, so only the government can censor people, according to you”. No one else here catches shit for that but me, so I know when someone wants to be an asshole about it because they think I won’t hit back.

> *20250803*
> *845am est*

You…you do know you don’t have to timestamp yourself, right? Like, there’s an actual timestamp on every post. What the hell, dude.

Collapse replies (6) | Reply | View in chronology

[7]

You (We, Us) August 3, 2025 at 6:42 pm

Re: Re: Re:[4]

What the hell, dude

My posts keep getting stuck in the “spam filter”

20250803
942pm

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[8]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 4, 2025 at 9:01 am

Re: Re: Re:[5]

Yes, and? When your post goes through, it still shows up with the correct timestamp.

Reply | View in chronology

[7]

You (We, Us) August 3, 2025 at 6:45 pm

Re: Re: Re:[4]

Not censorship then, according to you

You forgot to address this. I got the impression that you enjoyed arguing with yourself.

20250803
945pm est

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[8]

Anonymous Coward August 7, 2025 at 9:09 am

Re: Re: Re:[5]

So, like other trolls, you can't parse the difference between commenters based on their different writing styles all while claiming to "know" they're the same individual based on their writing styles.

Reply | View in chronology

[7]

Allan Savolainen August 3, 2025 at 8:57 pm

Re: Re: Re:[4]

I think people make the mistake that because government (usually in western countries) is prohibited from censoring most things, that only governments censor. But anyone can do it and often it is quite legal. You can, in advance, prevent someone taking at your house. You are censoring them and it is quite legal and usually fully supported by everyone except maybe the speaker.
Now with MC/VISA we have other issues like their practical duopoly and attempt to censor people at someone else's house not just MC/VISA's property.

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[8]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 4, 2025 at 8:50 am

Re: Re: Re:[5]

> *You can, in advance, prevent someone taking at your house. You are censoring them*

You're preventing them from exercising a privilege. That isn't censorship unless your view of that term is expansive enough to make you believe "we don't do that here" is the exact same concept as

"you won't do that anywhere".

Reply | View in chronology

[3]

Anonymous Coward August 2, 2025 at 3:29 am

Re: Re:

Since banks are insured by an agency of the Federal Government, isn't any refusal of payments for things they don't like government censorship at a stretch?

Collapse replies (7) | Reply | View in chronology

[4]

Uriel-238 (profile) August 3, 2025 at 1:04 pm

Re: Re: Re: Refusal to serve

I believe there are (or should be) equal accommodations statutes that cover that, even when we have situations like the *Masterpiece Cakes* ruling (which was complex and narrow, but set the general public notion that queers can be denied service by dickwads)

But no-one stopped the payment processors from denying transactions to Wikileaks and Julian Assange. (Git or no, he did provide the service of publishing whistleblower material which embarrassed US administrators doing naughty things.)

Since the camel got his nose in the tent, head, neck and shoulders were bound to follow.

Collapse replies (5) | Reply | View in chronology

[5]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 3, 2025 at 4:46 pm

Re: Re: Re:[2]

> *the Masterpiece Cakes ruling (which was complex and narrow, but set the general public notion that queers can be denied service by dickwads)*

No, you're thinking of *303 Creative*. In every court that decided the Masterpiece case on the merits, the case went in favor of the gay couple who had been discriminated against. SCOTUS ultimately punted on the issue on what was effectively procedural issues when the case crossed its bench.

Collapse replies (4) | Reply | View in chronology

[6]

Anonymous Coward August 7, 2025 at 9:16 am

Re: Re: Re:[3]

Honestly, I think Uriel *was* thinking of the Masterpiece Cakes case, which ruled that a bakery can refuse to decorate a cake with a LGBT+-positive message, but it can't refuse to provide the basic cake, which is discriminatory since any business refusing to decorate a cake with a straight-positive message is likely to be vilified and not every member of the LGBT+ community has the requisite skills to decorate their own cake or the resources to go out of state if necessary.

Collapse replies (3) | Reply | View in chronology

[7]

Uriel-238 (profile) August 7, 2025 at 2:14 pm

Re: Re: Re:[4] Imagine my surprise

Evidently, there are *several* cases which each nibbled away at regulatory statutes, so that Christian business owners get to assert their companies are strictly religious and can violate accommodations regulations (such as mandates to serve gays, or allowing work-provided insurance to pay for contraception), on the notion that a business can be religious, rather than their individual officials or stockholders.

But this came from Federalist-Society SCOTUS judges and federal appointees, who were placed in position to subvert rule of law and equal protections enough that literal books are written and published (and on tour!) about how bad it is.

I suspect there aren't many counter examples in which non-
Christian faiths or the Satanist org have been able to get religious exceptions to law

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[8]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 7, 2025 at 4:27 pm

Re: Re: Re:[5]

> *I suspect there aren't many counter examples in which non-Christian faiths or the Satanist org have been able to get religious exceptions to law*

That's primarily because people in those faiths—especially including members of The Satanic Temple—don't want religious exemptions from the law. They want the law to treat all faiths equally instead of privileging the nation's most common faith only because of that status.

Reply | View in chronology

[7]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 7, 2025 at 4:44 pm

Re: Re: Re:[4]

ACKSHUALLY…

In the *Masterpiece Cakeshop* case, up until the case went to SCOTUS, the bakery lost its case on the merits and was effectively given a choice: sell a basic wedding cake to a gay couple (which was the discriminatory act upon which the case was built) or eat a fine for each and every refusal to do that. (They chose Option C and stopped selling wedding cakes altogether.) An important point here is that the bakery never even discussed what decorations would be on the cake because it refused to even

sell a wedding cake to a gay couple—and I'll note that both the bakery and the couple stipulated that fact in court.

If the case had hinged on decorations, it may have went the way of *303 Creative*, which effectively held that the government can't force a person to express speech—even commercial speech—that violates their conscience. Despite that case's bullshit foundation, I still believe in the ruling thereof because **nobody**, including the most privileged people, should be forced to express speech that violates their conscience. No government entity should have the right to make me express anti-queer sentiments; other than any personal delight one might take in seeing it happen, for what reason should the government have the right to make an anti-queer bigot express speech that celebrates LGBTQ people/causes?

Reply | View in chronology

[4]

You (We, Us) August 3, 2025 at 6:49 pm

Re: Re: Re:

Well, I guess, if you feel entitled to a loan from the government every time you want to buy something.

20250803
949pm est

Reply | View in chronology

n00bdragon (profile) July 31, 2025 at 9:01 pm

Hey, if porn is the reason that **Rapes per 1000 people** has *cratered* in the last several decades, even as the percentage of rapes reported has *soared* thanks to a shift in the cultural zeitgeist, then perhaps we still *aren't porning* ***enough***.

Reply | View in chronology

glenn July 31, 2025 at 9:45 pm

People (and credit card companies) should be forced to mind their own fucking business.

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[2]

kythra (profile) August 2, 2025 at 8:05 am

Re: Forced to mind their own business

now that's an idea I can get on board with.

Reply | View in chronology

Heart of Dawn (profile) August 1, 2025 at 12:38 am

There are already laws and processes to remove illegal materials. The stores themselves can also curate what they want to tolerate and sell. Its not the job of payment processors to be the morality police.

The same is true of sex work too.

Reply | View in chronology

Operative August 1, 2025 at 1:01 am

Exposing "Puritans"

Everyone in Collective Shout, NCOSE, Exodus Cry, FiLiA and CATW, while their concerns about real world issues seen in Video Games is valid, They went too far with their puritan thinking. Besides, These “Puritans” are probably Closet Pedophiles.

I hope they see my message, They’ll never know who it was that made it.

Of course, if they prove themselves to not be closet pedophiles, they’ll have a chance to try to see things from another perspective. And not of the misogyny kind.
The Puritans are just as misogynistic as today’s men.
And more food for thought, Women can be just as misogynistic as Men too.

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[2]

Uriel-238 (profile) August 1, 2025 at 2:00 pm

Re: Puritans

In the case of *Collective Shout* their internal chat appears to imply they see gamers in general as perverts and child predators.

It’s not a good look when they want to be regarded as having reason and legitimacy on their side.

Reply | View in chronology

MathFox August 1, 2025 at 1:59 am

Collective Shout is abusing the (duopoly) market position that the credit card companies have. This could bring them new trouble with EU regulators, if you’re an EU citizen, feel free to complain at your local competition regulator.

Reply | View in chronology

David E. Nelson (profile) August 1, 2025 at 2:12 am

> *This is the result of a meddling minority attempting to foist their desires on everyone else, plain and simple.*

A meddling minority… Like the ultra-rich?

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[2]

Anonymous Coward August 1, 2025 at 6:37 am

Re:

Quiet and yearn for the mines like a good pleb!

Don't you want your American Dream™?

Reply | View in chronology

Kinetic Gothic August 1, 2025 at 2:50 am

Amusingly Enough

At the same time this is going on, the same right wingers, outraged at people trying to debank the NRA, and Oil Companies are passing laws against debanking based on political or religious views. one passed in TN already..

It includes the following catch all…

> *any factor if it is not a quantitative, impartial, and risk-based standard, including **any factor relating to the person's business sector***

Anyone know any one producing smut in TN, who'd like to sue?

Reply | View in chronology

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 1, 2025 at 3:34 am

So, itch.io announced that **it's re-indexing NSFW/adult content soon**. But here's the funny thing: In its announcement, it passed along a message from Stripe (a payment processor that was all too happy to accept payment for NSFW/adult content from itch.io for over 10 years until Collective Shout opened its collective mouth), and it kind of points people in a new direction:

> *Stripe is currently unable to support sexually explicit content due to restrictions placed on them by their banking partners, despite card networks generally supporting adult content (with the appropriate registrations). Stripe has indicated that they hope to be able to support adult content in the future.*

People already have the credit card companies freaked out about this. I'm sure PayPal and Stripe are catching some heat, too. And all that pressure should be kept on those companies until they truly decide to believe in payment processor neutrality. But now that Stripe has basically said "we can't give in because of the banks"? I get the feeling a fair number of major banks are going to get a drink from the firehose over the next few days—as well they should.

Reply | View in chronology

Anonymous Coward August 1, 2025 at 5:09 am

And, as an executive from Appcharge chimed in, the processors will hang this all on the amount of fraud and chargebacks that come along with adult content

If this is true, and I feel like there might actually be a hint of truth to it, it would be a reasonable argument assuming we didn't "have the receipts" so to speak. The removed content was fine for years until a third party lobbying group chimed in with their moral outrage and then suddenly it is about chargebacks. If that really was the problem then I would also expect the penalties be aimed at the companies with excess chargebacks rather than large platforms like Steam. On a side note, I would support Steam and other digital stores adopting something similar to what Amazon has done recently where they label items that have a high rate of return.

Reply | View in chronology

Anonymous Coward August 1, 2025 at 5:45 am

> *When porn can mean **Magic Treehouse**, the word loses all meaning.*

I have kids and have seen them full frontal without being at all turned on by that, so if anyone sees the image of Calvin in the linked article as pornographic in any way, the problem is clearly in the way *they* view children.

Reply | View in chronology

Cat_Daddy (profile) August 1, 2025 at 7:49 am

Credit Card Companies: "Oh no, the consequences of my actions!"

Reply | View in chronology

Uriel-238 (profile) August 1, 2025 at 1:57 pm

The camel's nose

< rant >

If you give an inch, they'll take a mile is the western version of a Arabian fable of the camel's nose, *If you allow the camel's nose into the tent, soon the whole camel will be inside, and refuse to leave.*

We've seen this multiple times with companies who have tried to appease the Trump regime by capitulating tribute and obedience, only to have more demanded of them.

I felt alarm when Julian Assange and *Wikileaks* were blocked by VISA and Mastercard in the 2010s after it published the Chelsea Manning files. This was a plot point of *Ransom* (the 1996 Mel Gibson vehicle), because the airline mogul paid to hush a company scandal, the smart goon saw he was a mark.

The Manning revelations were claimed to be a matter of US national security, but more so they were embarrassing to specific politicians who were abusing their power. The files belied misuse of US

national security resources, exactly the sort of thing that needs to be made public. It's also the sort of thing that pisses off the ownership class.

(Yes, I know Assange is a git and is — or at least has been — a Russian asset, but the service he provided was useful. Incidentally, the ACLU got a lot of early support from USSR because they caused the US state trouble, even though in retrospect the public might approve of that trouble.)

The rhetoric from both parties was not that the revealed behaviors and indulgences themselves jeopardized national security, but the publication that they occurred. It's a running theme in Washington since Reagan: Snitches are worse than the fraudsters, the extortionists, the insider traders. The ownership class does like making use of its privilege. Obama wanted to be whistleblower friendly until the wrongdoings of his own administration were getting published.

Wikileaks survived the VISA and Mastercard sanctions, but it informed how payment processing, when not obligated by common service accommodations mandates, can be used as a commerce pinch to block any kind of disliked transactions. I'm sure Collective Shout noticed this based on the Assange embargo.

Or they might have noticed VISA and Mastercard already have objections to some kinds of porn purchases already.

VISA and MasterCard has already dipped its nose into censoring porn, as observed by Sex Positive Gaming. Porn vendors who support these cards are restricted from peddling in certain themes, including incest, lolicon / developmental sex (so about 6% of explicit manga), LGBT+ themes and furry themes. Some games get rather comical in their disclaimers, that, for example, your twin sister is a step-sister because cat-magic!

Our shadowy plutocratic masters are already asserting their own opinions should be used to shape the world. …*It's my own design. It's my own remorse*…

(I remain confounded that furry porn / erotica featuring species-correct genitals — a feature of some content since the 1990s — is a separate controversy than furry porn itself. But then MLP content, pornographic or otherwise, is yet another controversy. Maybe we shouldn't be censoring porn based on personal tastes, or personal moral objections?)

We've seen how this plays out, from citizens of Napoleonic France shouting erotica aloud in the streets to passages of literary sex scenes added to email sig-files in defiance of the CDA. From publicly known bypasses of secret CD and DVD codecs to sophisticated malware escaping intact into the open internet, thanks to FBI sloppily using it to crack a CSAM exchange ring…

…to kids learning out to obtusely describe sexual acts, nudity and poses to LLMs (and learning how to format LORAs) to train public generative AI to crank out droves of sex scenes (in-between the eldritch horrors).

We humans, history shows us, really like our smut. Our moral guardians are obsessed at protecting us from our baser natures (and allegedly protect our kids, but not from greater harms like hunger and homelessness).

So shielded from the offenses of human sexy times, and content that celebrates it, We the People will seek it out. We'll detect censorship as damage and reroute around it. And if we have to, we'll deal with shadier merchants in shadier markets.

The Anarchists, Lunatics and Terrorists have been waiting nearby for a long time to hook us into the dark markets to gain access to all that is *verboten* by the state, whether that's exciting content, exciting chemistries or exciting political ideas. Come for the gooning material. Stay for the drugs. While you're here, maybe take interest in [intelligence techniques, sabotage techniques,] and high explosives…

…top it off, maybe, with some communist theory, so that when we finally topple the ownership class and our alleged moral guardians, the new boss isn't Same As The Old Boss.

< /rant >

Reply | View in chronology

That One Guy (profile) August 1, 2025 at 2:46 pm

INSIDER

If you can't differentiate fiction vs reality in one case...

Personally I myself am *way* more concerned about people who can't tell the difference between *fictional* depictions of acts, vile or not, than those that *can* tell the difference between fiction and

reality.

*Now, Collective Shout will tell you that it is mostly interested in going after games that depict vile actions in some ways, such as **rape, child abuse, and incest**.*

With that as their excuse I'm sure they've spent just as much time and effort campaigning against the bible, right?

... Right?

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[2]

Stephen T. Stone (profile) August 1, 2025 at 3:03 pm

Re:

The payment processors and credit card companies also tell on themselves by going after games with "problematic" content. Plenty of movies and books have depictions of sexual assault/rape and incest, which is what Collective Shout was so angry about in re: games. Other than the interactive nature of games, what makes that kind of content being in those games **more** problematic than the same kind of content being in books and movies? Like, why is the game *12 Minutes* (the story of which involves incest) somehow so much worse than the film *I Spit On Your Grave* (which depicts a graphic gang rape of the film's main character) that Mastercard theoretically has to step in and prevent the sale of the game while letting someone buy the movie without issue?

Reply | View in chronology

pcc (profile) August 2, 2025 at 8:07 am

INSIDER

Crypto until it passes; this happened before and will happen again.

Last time this happened it was about porn web sites, but it's the same problem which is easily solved by transacting in crypto. When the card companies finally get tired of loosing all that transaction profit then they will be back.

Collapse replies (2) | Reply | View in chronology

[2]

pcc (profile) August 2, 2025 at 8:27 am

INSIDER

Re: This is an opportunity for a third Visa/Mastercard competitor to rise

Also, when a new competitor to Visa and Mastercard swoop in to grab all the business the big two are neglecting, and people start getting used to using it, then it will become more clear what they care about most.

Collapse replies (1) | Reply | View in chronology

[3]

Anonymous Coward August 2, 2025 at 6:55 pm

Re: Re:

Not that I think I could really trust something like this set up by the *current* US government, but it's an option…

Article via France24(English); posted 7/31/25:

"How Brazil's innovative 'Pix' payment system is angering Trump and Zuckerberg"

Reply | View in chronology

Uriel-238 (profile) August 4, 2025 at 10:54 am

Also of interest [to me]...

…is that our transaction-processing oligopolistic masters deny porn for moralistic reasons, but still process fossil fuel product sales, beef sales, gun sales, etc. even though these do way more damage to society than content of sexy times. Their behavior isn't policy-consistent.

This may be done in the color of moralizing or preserving brand safety, but it's not about actual morality.

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